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U.S. Says Staying On Is 'Futile' And Offers to Be 'of Assistance'

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 24 — The White House called today for Ferdinand E. Marcos to surrender power and virtually offered a United States plane to take the Philippine President to safe haven in the United States.

As Administration officials met through the day in a crisis atmosphere, the White House said it would be "futile" for Mr. Marcos to prolong his rule through force.

"A solution to this crisis can only be achieved through a peaceful transition to a new government," the White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, said in a statement shortly after a telephone call at 5 A.M. between Mr. Reagan and his ranking advisers.

Ready to Be 'of Assistance'

Congressional leaders of both parties and key Reagan Administration officials made it clear later in the day that a consensus was emerging that Mr. Marcos faced little choice but to leave the Philippines after 20 years in power.

Mr. Speakes said the United States would be "of assistance" to Mr. Marcos should he seek asylum.

Officials said the early-morning White House statement came after reports that troops loyal to Mr. Marcos had started to attack crowds outside a military camp controlled by two disident Government officials, former Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Lieut. Gen. Fidel V. Ramos, the former Deputy Chief of Staff.

Hoping for Quick Departure

White House officials said the threat that violence could spread in the Philippines as a result of the attack outside the military camp led Mr. Reagan and his advisers to reject Mr. Marcos publicly in the hope that the Philippine leader would quickly depart and avert nationwide bloodshed.

Late today, the State Department strengthened a previous advisory on travel by Americans to the Philippines, warning that because of "unsettled conditions," Americans were advised against traveling there. The advisory also noted that some commercial flights to the Philippines had been canceled and that the airport in Manila was open only on an intermittent basis.

In an advisory issued Friday, the State Department urged Americans to

postpone nonessential travel to the Philippines. It said that if travel to the Philippines was essential, Americans should make contact with the United States Embassy upon arrival.

According to some officials, the pre-dawn White House decision to call for Mr. Marcos to step down was painful for Mr. Reagan because he considers Mr. Marcos a loyal United States ally.

At the White House, a ranking official said late today that the United States was seeking "to get Marcos to do the inevitable" and leave the Philippines. "That's the goal," the official said, adding, "We assume it would be impossible for him to govern because obviously the next step would be civil war."

White House officials said the United States had not formally asked Mr. Marcos to step aside, but a series of United States statements, public as well as private, bluntly signaled the intention of the Reagan Administration to put pressure on the Philippine President to leave. Mr. Reagan has not spoken to Mr. Marcos in recent days, officials said, but United States diplomats have done so.

"We certainly recognize him as an old friend and a longtime ally of the United States," Mr. Speakes said, "and our judgment is that a peaceful transition is the only solution to this crisis."

As to whether a United States military plane would be put at Mr. Marcos's disposal, Mr. Speakes said that "certainly we have adequate capacity" at Clark Air Base in the Philippines to handle Mr. Marcos's departure.

'Do Anything Possible'

Mr. Speakes, who was the sole Administration spokesman on the Philippines, said Mr. Reagan "would certainly do anything possible to help him achieve a peaceful resolution of the situation."

"There has been no request for asylum, and no offer of asylum nor no offer of any safe haven on military bases in the Philippines," Mr. Speakes said. "But we have expressed our willingness to be of assistance to an old friend and ally should he make a decision in any fashion."

Asked this afternoon whether the United States wanted Mr. Marcos to cancel his inauguration, scheduled for Tuesday, Mr. Speakes replied: "I don't think it's for us to say. We would certainly like a peaceful transition. Given the situation, if it could be worked out it would be better to do quicker than later."

The White House spokesman said that, as far as the Administration understood, the scheduled Marcos inauguration was "a private affair, and no

foreign governments have been invited to send representatives, so there will be none from the United States or any other countries, I presume."

According to White House officials, Mr. Reagan was awakened at 5 A.M. this morning for a telephone call with his national security adviser, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, and Donald T. Regan, the White House chief of staff.

At that meeting, after intelligence reports had reached the White House of a potentially violent confrontation between military supporters and foes of Mr. Marcos, it was decided to issue a statement that called on the Philippine leader to yield power.

The White House statement said in part: "President Marcos has pledged to refrain from initiating violence and we appeal to him and those loyal to him and all other Filipino people to continue to do so."

"Attempts to prolong the life of the present regime by violence are futile. A solution to this crisis can only be achieved through a peaceful transition to a new government."

The White House made an usual effort to publicize the statement, with Mr. Speakes making himself available for television and radio interviews in time for the morning news programs. Officials said it was the White House intention to make the United States position known in the Philippines as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Philip C. Habib, the special Presidential envoy who recently returned from the Philippines, briefed 27 members of Congress on Capitol Hill about the Administration's efforts to resolve the crisis.

One of the legislators attending the meeting, Senator Richard G. Lugar, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said it was his "own private view" that the United States should offer refuge to Mr. Marcos.

"I don't believe his Government is viable," Mr. Lugar said, "but clearly there are military forces at his disposal that could cause bloodshed."

'How It All Unravels'

The Senate majority leader, Bob Dole of Kansas, urged Mr. Marcos to step down, but left unclear whether he thought the Philippine leader should be granted asylum.

"I think it depends on how it all unravels," Mr. Dole said. "If a lot of people are not shot up, I think he'd be favorably received."

Senator Patrick J. Leahy, Democrat of Vermont, the deputy chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said: "Marcos has to leave and the sooner, the better. I would not at all be surprised to see Marcos out within a week."

During the day, as snow fell in Washington, hundreds of anti-Marcos demonstrators appeared in Lafayette Park, across from the White House.

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